

## HOUSE BILL NO. 522

INTRODUCED BY W. JONES, KITZENBERG

A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE BOARD OF REGENTS FOR DISTRIBUTION TO MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY-BOZEMAN TO CONDUCT A FEASIBILITY STUDY CONCERNING THE TRAINING OF MONTANA DENTAL STUDENTS AT MONTANA STATE UNIVERSITY AND THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON."

WHEREAS, it is commonly known that Montana suffers from a shortage of dentists, particularly in the more rural areas of the state; and

WHEREAS, the shortage of dentists in Montana has been so longstanding and is so acute that the survey of health professional shortage areas conducted by the Bureau of Health Professions in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services classifies at least 27 of Montana's counties as "frontier"; and

WHEREAS, Montana's population of practicing dentists is growing older and concern exists in the dental profession in Montana that the supply of dentists is not being replenished; and

WHEREAS, for the medical profession, the state has created the Montana Rural Physician Incentive Program and the Montana Family Practice Residency Program, but no similar programs exist to bring new dentists into the state; and

WHEREAS, because Montana has no dental school of its own it must rely upon dental programs at other educational institutions to provide Montana with graduate dental students; and

WHEREAS, the University of Washington Dental School has proposed a plan whereby Montana resident students at Montana State University in Bozeman, Montana, would complete 1 year of dental training at Montana State University and then transfer to the University of Washington to complete their dental training; and

WHEREAS, under the proposed plan, students graduating from the University of Washington would return to Montana for clinical practice; and

WHEREAS, the proposal by the University of Washington could be coupled with a clinical requirement to bring more Montana graduate dental students back to Montana, in a manner similar to the existing program for physicians; and

WHEREAS, it would be necessary to conduct a feasibility study on the proposal made by the University of Washington, and that study would cost money that should be appropriated by the Montana Legislature as an

1 investment in the future of dental practices and dental access in Montana.

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3 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

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5 NEW SECTION. **Section 1. Appropriation for dental school feasibility study.** (1) There is  
6 appropriated from the general fund to the board of regents for distribution to Montana state university-Bozeman  
7 \$5,000 for each of fiscal years 2006 and 2007 for the purposes of a study as provided in this section.

8 (2) The study must determine the feasibility of Montana state university making an agreement with the  
9 university of Washington dental school to have first-year dental students complete dental courses at Montana  
10 state university and then transfer to the university of Washington for completion of dental education. The plan  
11 ~~must also require~~ SHALL ENCOURAGE the return of Montana graduates to Montana after completion of their dental  
12 education.

13 (3) ~~The~~ A REPORT ON THE study must be ~~completed~~ PREPARED by January 1, 2007. ~~On or before that~~  
14 ~~date the~~ THE regents shall present a THE report on the study to the legislature detailing the manner in which the  
15 program would operate and its costs to Montana. The report must be distributed to the legislature in the manner  
16 provided in 5-11-210.

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